

# 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER

## THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Jesus is the Good Shepherd, who laid down His life for us on the cross and resurrected to give us new life. He is also the One, who, during His public life, taught us how to love. Like a shepherd does for his sheep, Jesus calls us by name, is concerned for us, listens to us, looks for us when we get far from Him, and knows each one of us individually. This is our Good Shepherd, the One who has the greatest love for us and continues this mission through His leaders in the Church – bishops and priests.

### PRIMARY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**You can trust Jesus to take care of you like a shepherd does his sheep.**

*Scripture Resources:* [John 10:11-18](#); [Psalm 23](#)

*Catechism Resources:* [CCC 764](#)

**Jesus desires that all people come into His sheepfold, the Church.**

*Scripture Resources:* [John 10:16](#)

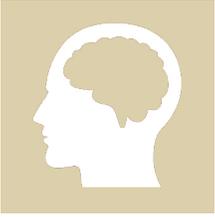
*Catechism Resources:* [CCC 759](#)

**Bishops and priests shepherd us because they are the leaders of the Church.**

*Scripture Resources:* [Ephesians 4:11-13](#)

*Catechism Resources:* [CCC 861-862](#)





## PONDER: EXPLORE KEY THEMES FOR THE WEEK

*Look for opportunities throughout the week to ponder with and communicate these truths to your child(ren). Use the questions and explanation for each objective as a guide. The “Younger” and “Older” Children sections are loosely divided by the “age of reason.” You know your child(ren) best (what questions will resonate better with them, if they need a simpler or a more complex version of a particular objective, etc.), so use the section that works best for your family. Refer to the Parent Guide for more recommendations on pondering with your child(ren). Remember that our faith is a mystery that we can always ponder, but sometimes we do not always fully understand and that is ok!*

### FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

#### *Learning Objectives*

## 01 You can trust Jesus to take care of you like a shepherd does his sheep.

*To ponder this idea with your child, ask:*

- If Jesus created everything and everyone for us, including mommy, daddy, grandma, and grandpa, how big is His love for us? Talk to your children about how Jesus loves us more than anyone else.
- Scripture tells us, “The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack.” ([Psalm 23:1](#))
- What things do we need to live? How are they provided?
- Jesus tells us He is the Good Shepherd ([John 10:11](#)). What does He do to take care of us?

## 02 Jesus desires that all people come into His sheepfold, the Church.

The Church is also our home, a place Jesus gave us to love and be loved. We are a family. We have many brothers and sisters in the Church, all children of one Father — God.

*To ponder this idea with your child, ask:*

- How would you describe your home? What do you like about it?
- Who are the people in the Church that you know?
- How can you help Jesus to invite more people into His Church, our spiritual home?

### 03 Bishops and priests shepherd us because they are the leaders of the Church.

*To ponder this idea with your child, ask:*

- Have you ever met a priest at your parish?
- Can you think of something you heard from him at Mass or in another moment in the church?
- What would you like to say to Fr. (name of your priest) after Mass?

***I am the good shepherd.***  
*A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*

John 10:11



#### FOR OLDER CHILDREN

##### *Learning Objectives*

### 01 You can trust Jesus to take care of you like a shepherd does his sheep.

Jesus wishes to win our trust through His love. He gave up His own life to give us true life. Jesus says, "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends." The more we entrust our lives, our worries, our hearts, and our needs to Him, the more we grow in the understanding that He is the greatest provider, protector, and nurturer of our lives.

*To ponder this idea with your child, ask:*

- Who is the person that you trust the most and why?
- Who would give up his/her life for you?
- What would you like to say to Jesus Who gave up His life for you?
- How do you think you could grow your trust in Jesus even more?

## 02 Jesus desires all people come into His sheepfold, the Church.

Jesus is the head of the Church and we are the body. All together we form the Catholic Church, a beautiful family with people from all nations and with many different gifts. The Church is our home and a welcoming place for all. The Church is the family that Jesus has given us through our baptism.

*To ponder this idea with your child, ask:*

- Who do you admire in the Church?
- Who do you think Jesus wants to be in His Church?
- How can you help this family, the Church, to grow more?

## 03 Bishops and priests shepherd us because they are the leaders of the Church.

The mandate Jesus gave to Peter to shepherd the Church continues to be carried out by many others who came after Him, among them bishops and priests. These men, although imperfect, represent the person of Jesus for us and are called to live a life of holiness. Like Him, they are called to shepherd us and give their lives for the Church.

*To ponder this idea with your child, ask:*

- Who is the shepherd of your house, the person who takes care of you and provides for all?
- What about in the Church? Who are the people that Jesus entrusted to take care of all Jesus' children?
- Do you know the pastor of your parish? What do you like about him?



### LISTEN: FAMILY LECTIO DIVINA

*Choose one or more of the passages listed below for this week's family Lectio Divina time. Ask what your child's favorite part is or what stood out to them. Ask what God may be trying to show your child through the chosen scripture. Please refer to the Parent Guide for further recommendations on doing Lectio Divina with children.*

[John 10:11-18](#) - Jesus, the Good Shepherd  
[Psalm 23](#) - God, the Good Shepherd

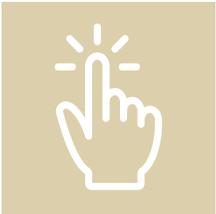


## PRAY: SPECIAL PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

**FOR THE FAMILY:** Pray the beginning of **Psalm 23**

“The LORD is my Shepherd;  
 there is nothing I lack.  
 In green pastures He makes me lie down;  
 to still waters He leads me;  
 He restores my soul.  
 He guides me along right paths  
 for the sake of his name.  
 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
 I will fear no evil, for you are with me;  
 your rod and your staff comfort me.”

[Psalm 23:1-4](#)



## ACT: CONCRETE WAYS TO LIVE OUT THIS WEEK'S THEME

**FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN:** Create a sheep mask with your children to symbolize that we are all Jesus' sheep. Each mask requires one paper plate, some cotton balls, and glue. Cut the inner circle out of the plate and set it aside. Glue the cotton balls all around the edges of the plate. Cut ears for the sheep from the inner circle of the plate.

Play with your children and share with them that no matter our age or who we are, Jesus is our Good Shepherd, the best shepherd, and we will always be His sheep. Look [here](#) for more detailed instructions on making the sheep masks.

**FOR OLDER CHILDREN:** After reading the Gospel of the Good Shepherd with your children, invite them to collect food or to buy a meal for a homeless child or adult; then, go with them to give out the food. Explain to your children that Jesus, our Shepherd, is the main provider for the things we need in our home, our food, a comfy bed, a place to play, to study, etc. After giving the homeless person the food, explain to your children that on that day you had the opportunity be part of Jesus' mission, letting them know that Jesus cares for the homeless also through our care for them.